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Director, District 1



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101 Corridor

A Caltrans publication dedicated to the Eureka to Arcata Route 101 Corridor Improvement Project in Humboldt County

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P.O. Box 3700
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A Note from the Project Manager

As the project manager for the Eureka to Arcata Route 101 Corridor Improvement Project, I am very happy to publish our first newsletter for the project. This project will improve safety, reduce operational conflicts and delay in the Route 101 corridor between Eureka and Arcata. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep interested parties, including citizens, resource and regulatory agencies, special interest groups, businesses and other public agencies apprised of our recent accomplishments on the project.

As you may already know, we began work on the environmental clearance process for the project in July 2001 and the first 6 months have been very busy. The following articles will highlight some items completed or begun in those months. I continue to welcome your interest and involvement in this project. If you would like to contact me with any questions or to discuss the project, please email me at:

kim_floyd@dot.ca.gov

Project Website

The project now has an Internet site you can bookmark and find the latest information on the project. Information on the site includes the “purpose and need” for the project as well as information on the environmental process. Please use your Internet browser to navigate to the following site:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist1/d1projects.htm>

Establishment of a Safety Corridor

A Safety Corridor will be established on Route 101 from the Eureka Slough to Gannon Slough before Memorial Day 2002. The Safety Corridor is intended to serve to improve safety in the corridor until the Route 101 Corridor Improvement project is implemented. Specific objectives of the Safety Corridor include:

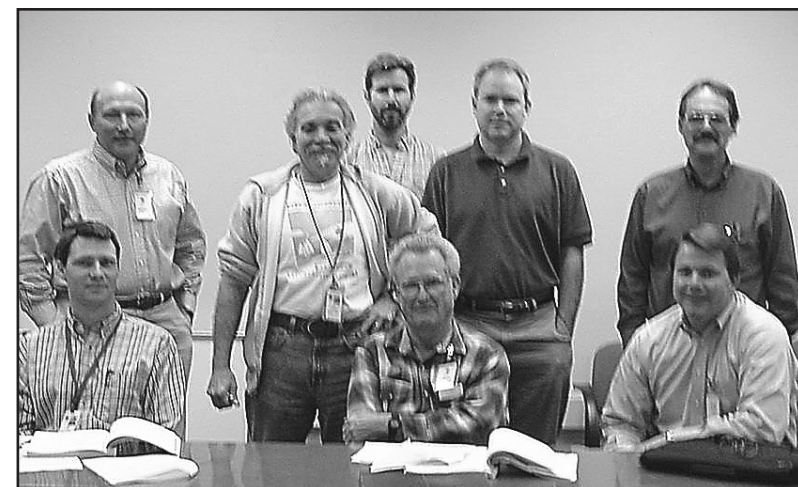
- Actions that can improve safety without creating new problems.
- Actions that can be implemented relatively quickly.
- Actions that will not create significant adverse impacts to the public or the environment.

Principle elements will include: signing for Safety

Corridor, reducing the speed limit from 60 to 50 mph., adding Radar Speed Detection Signs under speed limit signs before major intersections, enhancing the Headlight Section signing, adding flashing red lights to stop signs at public road intersections, adding yellow flashing beacons on Route 101 in advance of public road intersections, adding permanent changeable message signs on public roads in advance of stop signs (to display caution messages), enhancing enforcement, legislation to

double fines for corridor, increasing public education through safety tips on TV, radio, and print media.

The success of the Safety Corridor involves all of us. Please drive responsibly, defensively, and courteously.



Value Analysis Team: (standing - left to right) Fred Kolano, VMS Consultant Team Leader, Joel Canzoneri, Caltrans Transportation Planner, Chris Whitworth, County of Humboldt Public Works, John Carson, Caltrans Traffic Operations, Jack Miller, CA Dept. of Fish and Game (seated - left to right) Todd Lark, Caltrans Design, Rudy Ramp, Humboldt County Resident, Brent Siemer, City of Eureka Public Works. Not pictured: Ralph Martinelli, Traffic Safety, and Melinda Molnar, Caltrans Biologist

Maria Contreras-Sweet
Secretary, California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

Gray Davis
Governor

Jeff Morales
Director, Department of Transportation

Project Timeline

Caltrans is currently in the process of preparing a Project Report & Environmental Document. The purpose for the Project Report is to document the selection of a preferred alternative that meets the purpose and need for the project. Below is a chronological timeline for the project through the completion of the environmental document.

- **Begin Project Study Report & Initiate Preliminary Environmental Studies at the request of Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG)- May 1999**
- **Develop Preliminary Alternatives - Fall 1999**
- **Open House Public Meeting to discuss alternatives - March 7, 2000**
- **Project Study Report (PSR) completed - May 1, 2000**
- **Supplemental PSR completed at request of HCAOG - September 14, 2000**
- **HCAOG submits Regional Transportation Plan to California Transportation Committee. Resources for Environmental Document completion are programmed - Winter 2000/Spring 2001**
- **Begin Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Document - July 1, 2001**
- **Public Scoping Meeting - September 20, 2001**
- **Value Analysis - October 2001**
- Public Informational Meeting - Fall 2002
- Draft Environmental Document Circulation & Public Hearing- January 2004
- Project Report w/ Preferred Alternative identified & Complete Environmental Document - December 2005

Note: Bold items have been completed.

Corridor Simulation Model

A traffic micro-simulation model, Paramics, is currently being used to aid in evaluating the change in traffic volumes associated with implementing particular strategies in the corridor. The model incorporates geometrics, driver behavior, vehicle paths, facility types, and traffic control devices, and will be utilized to assess how traffic will react to changes in the highway system.

For a five-day period, Monday through Friday, in September 2001 a combination of 165 counting systems were placed by Caltrans at multiple locations along Route 101, Route 255, and Old Arcata Road. The data collected during this period was used to identify the patterns of regional traffic on these routes and to calibrate the corridor simulation model. Data is representative of weekday traffic during the sampling period.

The traffic model will be used to simulate existing traffic flows and to determine how these flows change after implementation of any alternative.

Value Analysis

Value Analysis (VA) on the project was completed in early 2002. Value Analysis is a function-oriented, systematic team approach, used to analyze and improve value

in a product. It is a powerful methodology for solving problems and/or reducing costs while improving performance and quality. There are several reasons why Caltrans uses Value Analysis. They include: to maintain Federal funding; to build consensus with project stakeholders; help solve difficult problems; and identify cost savings while maintaining or improving project quality.

The VA team (identified and pictured on page 1) was selected to include both internal and external stakeholders. Project stakeholders included, Caltrans Management, Army Corps of Engineers, National Marine Fisheries, Humboldt County Association of Government (HCAOG), US Fish & Wildlife Service, California Coastal Commission, City of Arcata Public Works, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Eureka Police Department, Table Bluff Reservation, California Highway Patrol, the County of Humboldt Planning Department, the City of Eureka, County of Humboldt Public Works Department and the general public.

The team and stakeholders met in October 2001. At the first meeting, the team was informed of the project history to date and the “purpose and need” for the project, which is to improve safety, reduce operational conflicts and reduce delay. The stakeholders present at the meeting were able to identify their concerns early on. The VA team then identified and agreed upon performance criteria to use to evaluate and rank ideas. The performance criteria decided on were safety improvements (28% weight), mainline operation (19% weight), adjacent area impacts (17% weight), biological impacts (17% weight), environmental (archaeological, visual, air quality, energy consumption and aesthetic) impacts (12% weight), and route system impacts (7% weight). The team then brainstormed and evaluated (using the performance criteria) over 75 ideas, including comments received from the public during the September 20, 2001 scoping meeting, against the base case alternative. The scope of the base case alternative used was: “close medians, construct an interchange at Indianola, improve right turn acceleration and deceleration lanes and widen existing shoulders.” The team then chose the best alternatives from the ideas and further developed and analyzed those. The alternatives presented to the stakeholders included:

- 1.0 Eliminate shoulder widening from the base case
- 2.1 Construct Eureka to Arcata collector road with a 6th Street bridge over Eureka Slough.
- 2.2 Construct Eureka to Indianola collector road with a 6th Street bridge over Eureka Slough.
- 3.0 Implement traffic systems management
- 4.0 Use pace cars to create traffic gaps
- 5.0 Eliminate all median openings with no interchange
- 6.1 Base case with flyover interchange at Indianola (includes roundabout)
- 6.2 Base case with a single point interchange
- 6.3 Base case with a roundabout interchange
- 7.0 Base case adding a southbound Jacobs Avenue hook ramp
- 8.0 Implement mass transit to maintain existing Average Daily Traffic

One item to mention is that alternative 6.1 was the result of an idea and an actual model brought to Caltrans by an interested citizen.

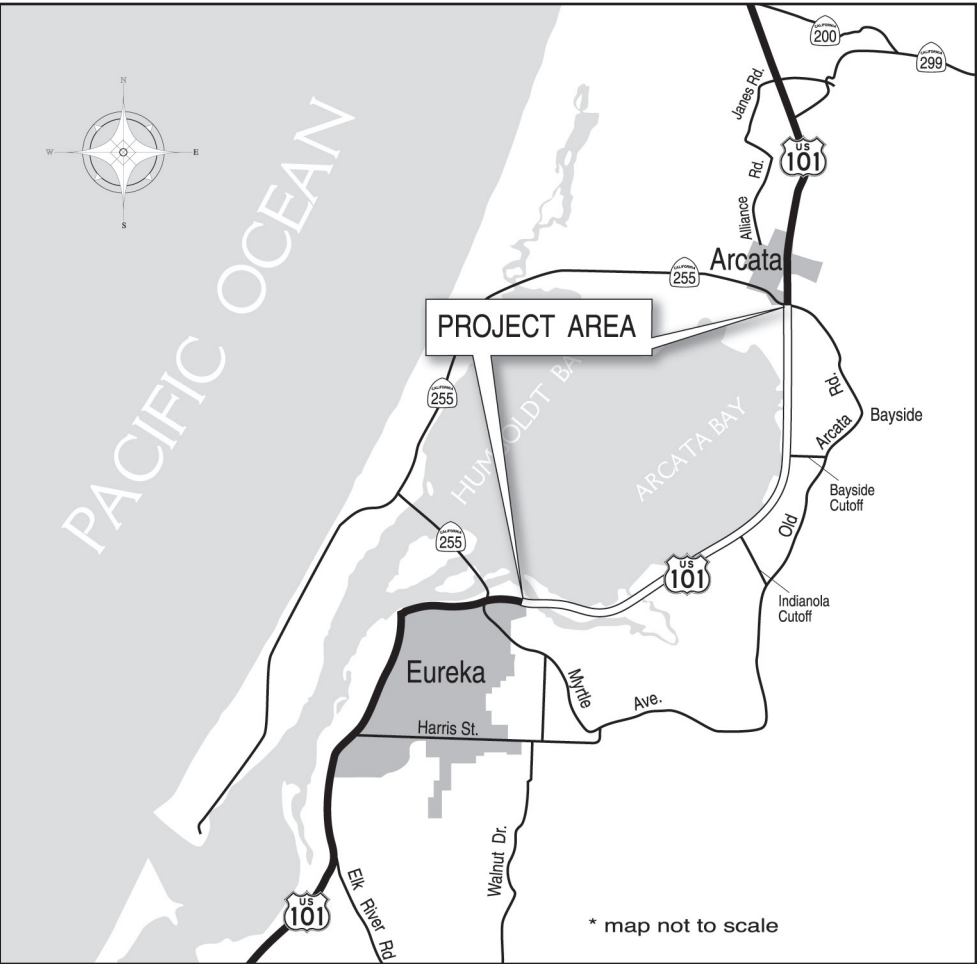
The VA team and project stakeholders concluded that Alternatives 1.0, 5.0, 6.2, and 6.3 should be evaluated further. Alternatives 1.0 and 5.0 enhanced the performance of the project while reducing cost. Alternatives 6.2 and 6.3 add performance and may reduce impacts, but also add to the project cost. The VA report should be available at the project website in April 2002.

Scoping Meetings Held For Route 101 Eureka/Arcata Corridor Improvement Project

Caltrans in cooperation with the Humboldt County Association of Governments, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), held a Public Scoping Meeting for the Route 101 Eureka/ Arcata Corridor Improvement Project at the Wharfinger Building in Eureka on September 20, 2001. This meeting served as a means for Caltrans to “scope out” or identify project related environmental issues/concerns at the beginning of the environmental process. There were actually two separate meetings convened on the same day. The first meeting was held with public agency representatives (e.g. the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Humboldt Bay Harbor Recreation and Conservation District) and the second meeting was held for anyone from the public interested in the project. The meetings also provided an opportunity for agencies and the public to review preliminary project information and scheduling.

Approximately 50 people attended the general public meeting and Caltrans received 34 comments on the project. While the majority of individuals expressed support for improvements to the corridor, some expressed concern about possible biological impacts and impacts to businesses. Eight comments were received from individuals who favored installing traffic signals and lowering the speed limit. All of the comments received were given to the Value Analysis team for evaluation.

The two meetings were held in compliance with both Federal and State regulations: National Environmental Policy Act and the California Environmental Quality Act. A Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement was published in the Federal Register on August 31, 2001 per the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. A Notice of Preparation (NOP) to prepare an Environmental Impact Report/Statement was sent to all public agencies that might



have a concern or permitting responsibility in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act. The NOP served as a formal meeting invitation to these agencies.

The following are a few of the items discussed at the meetings:

- The feasibility of in-kind wetland replacement;
- How interim projects would fit into this larger project;
- Commercial development potential at the Route 101/Indianola intersection;
- Possibility of a traffic signal at Indianola Cutoff;
- Potential cumulative impacts of the proposed County improvements to Old Arcata Road, Route 101 interim projects and this Eureka-Arcata Corridor project.

Caltrans staff, working with the FHWA and HCAOG, will now use the public comment information to prepare the draft environmental document.

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document is available in Braille, large print, audiocassette or computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please call or write: Ann Jones, Public Affairs Officer, Caltrans - District 1, P. O. Box 3700, Eureka, CA 95502-3700, (707) 445-6444 (voice phone) or (707) 445-6463 (TTY).